

Mattapan Reporter

“The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

All contents copyright © 2008 Boston Neighborhood News, Inc.

Volume 6 Issue 43

Thursday, October 23, 2008

Free

Changes seen likely for city schools plan

BY NATE LESKOVIC
SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER
Superintendent Carol Johnson's budget-trimming plan to reorganize, close, and consolidate schools may not be the final word for schools facing the axe.

Students, parents and staff from the Noonan Business Academy, the Academy of Public Service (APS), the Lucy Stone Elementary School and the Quincy E. Dickerman Elementary School argued

against the closure of their schools last week during meetings Johnson scheduled at each school to hear feedback on her “Pathways to Excellence” plan.

The forums made waves and at least one possible change – Johnson proposed moving the Stone Elementary School into the nearby Oliver W. Holmes Elementary School, as opposed to expanding the Holmes into a K-8 school.

School committee chair

Elizabeth Reilinger also announced a decision to postpone a scheduled Oct. 29 vote on the plan – which also aims to boost student achievement – in order to collect more information and gather more public input. Instead of a vote, Johnson will make another presentation.

Reilinger said she expects a decision at the committee's Nov. 5 meeting and is confident the delay will not impact the timeline for choosing schools for next year.

“We want to be able to know and communicate more clearly, to any school being affected, what the implementations are,” she said. “We really needed another week to make a thoughtful and smart decision.”

Both Johnson and Reilinger said the reshuffling plans could change before the vote and broad strategic goals for the system could be considered

(Continued on page 8)

City preps for huge voter turnout

BY GINTAUTAS DUMCIUS
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

With less than two weeks to go until Election Day, Boston elections officials announced the move of three polling locations, citing expectations of large crowds that would raise space issues as well as ongoing problems with access for the disabled.

For Ward 14's precincts 12 and 13, the new location will be at Berea SDA Academy at 800 Morton Street, instead of the Metropolitan Baptist Church on Norfolk Street.

South Boston will see two polling locations moved to South Boston Neighborhood

REPORTER'S VIEW:
Our pick for president
Page 13

House Senior Center and the Old Colony Teen Center, instead of the James Flaherty Housing Complex and the Mary Ellen McCormack Task Force Office., respectively. Those are for Ward 6's precincts 4 and 6, and Ward 7, precincts 6 and 7.

The moves come after city elections officials, along with Secretary of State William Galvin's office, evaluated over 30 polling locations because of

(Continued on page 6)

State cuts hit hard in non-profit sector

BY GINTAUTAS DUMCIUS
REPORTER CORRESPONDENT

For Bill Walczak, co-founder of the Codman Square Health Center, the \$900 million in cuts to the state's budget that Gov. Deval Patrick announced last week are actually the second round. A number of state agencies absorbed cuts at the beginning of the budget year in July, he noted in a recent interview.

Now they're faced with even deeper cuts as Patrick moved to close a \$1.4 billion hole in the state's \$28.2 billion budget. Walczak said he's expecting a cut of up to \$400,000 to his center, which he has run since the 1970s, but added he can't yet say for sure until contracts are renegotiated with the state.

“It's not a good situation,” he said. “Mental health programs got hurt very badly. The social fabric of Dorchester has been harmed by these cuts.”

Overall, Dorchester non-profits could end up losing “several million” dollars in revenue as a result of the cuts, he added.

The battery of cuts include reduced spending on low-income child care, seniors' health care, adoption and foster care in a Department of Social Services account, adult mental health and support, state facilities for the mentally handicapped, residential schools for special education, and elder home care. One account providing seniors with prescription medication assistance plunged 12 percent. Higher education accounts fell 5 percent, with the University of Massachusetts system getting a \$25 million cut.

Most Dorchester programs were cut in half, lawmak

(Continued on page 4)

STARS COME OUT FOR MATTAPAN CDC GALA



Liz Walker, the legendary WBZ-TV news anchor, was the keynote speaker at last Thursday's “Gateway to Boston” gala hosted by the Mattapan Community Development Corporation. Hundreds packed the Milton Hoosic Club for the dinner, which included award presentations to Boston Public Schools superintendent Dr. Carol Johnson and Dr. Judy Ann Bigby, commissioner of the state's Dept. of Health and Human Services. More, page 14.

Photo by Super Star Photography/ Rich Moore

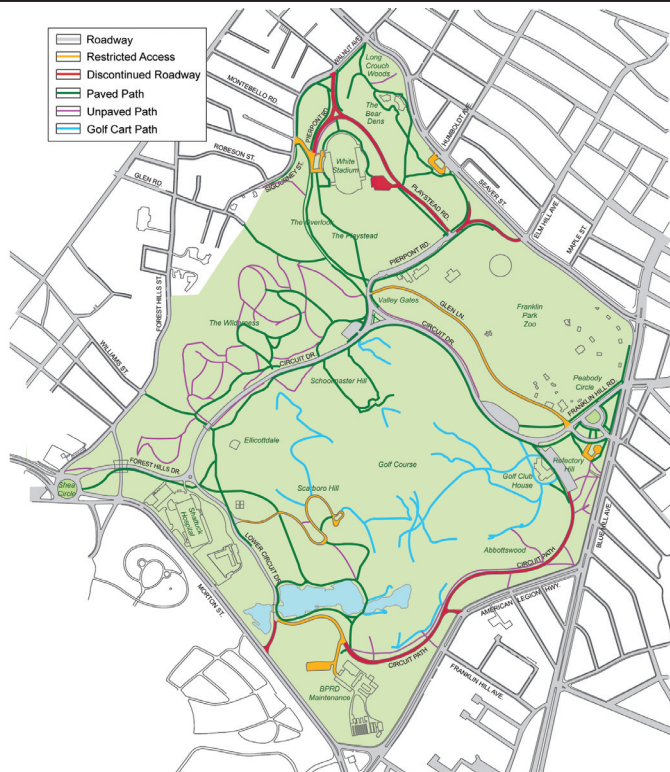
New look eyed for old park

BY PETE STIDMAN
NEWS EDITOR

In some ways Franklin Park is a ruin of itself, roads overgrown with weeds winding through jungle-like wilderness and rocky ruins rising up from the groundcover. Back in the 1880s Frederick Law Olmsted carefully planned how visitors would tour the park on paths and carriage roads. But over the years, things have changed.

In 1890 the golf course was installed; in 1945, White Stadium; in 1954, the Lemuel

(Continued on page 20)



Crossing guard is badly hurt

BY BILL FORRY
MANAGING EDITOR

A Pope's Hill woman who works as a crossing guard on Meetinghouse Hill is fighting for her life this week after she was struck by a car while standing in a crosswalk near the Mather School. Marie Conley, 59, was hit by a vehicle driven by an elderly man just before 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

Conley was hit at the intersection of Winter Street and Parish Street, right next to the First Parish Church. The mother of four was rushed to Boston Medical Center

(Continued on page 20)

**INSIDE TODAY'S
MATTAPAN
REPORTER**

**CDCs ready to pounce on
foreclosed properties**

Page 2

**Remembering the
mayoral race of '83**

Page 12

Commentary..... 12,13
Neighborhood Notables..... 14
Police Logs..... 22
Obituaries..... 25